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ART. I.—1. *Essai sur Jean Jacques Rousseau par Bernardin de St Pierre.* Paris, 1818.

2. *Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de J. J. Rousseau par V. D. Musset Pathay.* 2 Vols. 8vo. Paris, 1821.

NOTWITHSTANDING the length of time which has elapsed since the death of Rousseau and the strong interest which has always been felt in his person and character, there is yet no good biography of him in any language. His Confessions supply the deficiency for the greater part of his life; but like the charming memoirs of himself by Franklin they break off before its close, and leave of course some of the most interesting scenes wholly undescribed. The fulness of this recital, as far as it goes, is probably however one of the principal reasons why no supplementary work has yet been attempted by a writer of competent ability. The second of the publications, whose titles are prefixed to this article, is a laborious and well meant effort, made by an enthusiastic admirer of Rousseau, to complete his history and to vindicate his character and principles, from all the charges that have been made against them. This second object is so plainly injudicious, that it betrays at once a want of power and philosophy in the mind of the biographer. The intelligent friends of Rousseau are the first to admit that his errors of theory and practice

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were numerous and considerable. There is also an entire absence of literary talent in the execution of the work, and it has no other merit than that of bringing together from various quarters all the facts that are known respecting the life of the famous Genevan, and of rendering more accessible several detached accounts, which had previously appeared of particular passages in his history.

The Essay of Bernardin de St Pierre is of a different description, as may be supposed from the name of the writer. It has the attraction of style, which uniformly marks his productions, and the interest which necessarily attends the observations of one deep and powerful thinker upon the character of another. It is however only an unfinished fragment of less than a hundred pages, which the author did not complete, and which has lately appeared with some other unpublished writings in the edition of his works which we noticed in a former number. One or two passages contained in it were inserted by the author in the *Studies of Nature*. We propose to lay before our readers several extracts from this interesting little sketch, and shall afterwards add a few others from the materials collected by the new biographer.

The acquaintance of Rousseau and Bernardin de St Pierre commenced in the following manner. The latter was returning home in the year 1771 from the Isle of France after his long and unsuccessful chase in pursuit of fortune; and touched in his way at the Cape of Good Hope, where he was detained for some time. In a letter from this place he dwells in strong language upon the pleasure, which he promised himself from his return of enjoying two summers in the same year—the month of January when he wrote being the time of vintage at the Cape and corresponding with that of August in France. The person to whom this letter was sent communicated it to Rousseau, who immediately expressed a desire to become acquainted with the writer. Upon his arrival at Paris, St Pierre was accordingly introduced to the eccentric philosopher. The latter received him with great cordiality, and said that he should always esteem a man, whose mind, on returning from the land of fortune, was occupied with the expectation of enjoying two summers in one year. Such was the beginning of their acquaintance, which grew into a lasting and intimate friendship. These facts are related by the biographer of St Pierre. His own narrative

commences with the following account of his first interview with Rousseau.

‘In the month of June 1772, a mutual friend accompanied me to the dwelling of J. J. Rousseau, which was then in the *Rue Platrière* nearly opposite the post office. We ascended three pair of stairs and knocked at the door, which was opened to us by Madame Rousseau. She said to us—“Come in, gentlemen, my husband is at home.” We passed through a small antichamber neatly set out with household furniture into a room where Rousseau was seated in a great coat and white cap, copying music. He rose with a smiling air and placed chairs for us, and then sat down again to his work, conversing with us at the same time.

‘He was of middling stature and thin. One of his shoulders appeared a little higher than the other, either from a natural defect, from age, or from his habitual attitude. In other respects he was well proportioned. His complexion was dark with a tinge of red on the cheeks—his mouth handsome—his nose well formed—his forehead round and high, and his eyes full of fire. The lines, which fall obliquely from the nostrils towards the extremities of the mouth and give the face its expression, denoted in his acute sensibility and something like distress.

‘His sunken eyes and heavy eyebrows indicated melancholy, and the furrows in his forehead profound sadness; while at the same time a number of small wrinkles at the outer corners of the eyes, which closed when he laughed, expressed a lively and even satirical wit. These opposite qualities predominated by turns in the general expression of his countenance, accordingly as his mind was affected by the different subjects that occurred in conversation. When tranquil, it exhibited something of them all; and inspired at the same time feelings of affection, respect, and pity.

‘Near him was a spinnet, which he occasionally touched. The furniture of the chamber consisted of two small beds of blue and white cotton and hangings of the same, a chest of drawers, a table, and a few chairs. There hung against the wall a plan of the wood and park of Montmorency, where he had lived, and an engraved portrait of the king of England, formerly his patron. His wife was seated at her needle work; a canary bird was singing in a cage which hung from the ceiling, and several sparrows were picking crumbs of bread at

a window that opened toward the street. At the antichamber window were placed several boxes and pots of indigenous plants. Altogether there was an air of neatness and quiet simplicity in this little establishment, which was singularly pleasing.

‘He spoke to me at first of his travels; and the conversation afterwards turned upon the news of the day. He then read to us the manuscript of a letter he had just been writing, in answer to one in which the Marquis de Mirabeau requested him to publish something more upon political subjects. He entreats the Marquis not to insist upon his engaging again in the bustle of literary controversy. We talked of his works, and I told him that those which pleased me most were the *Devin du Village* and the third volume of *Emile*. He appeared to be charmed with my opinion. “They are also those,” said he, “which I am best pleased to have written. My enemies may say what they will, but they will never compose a *Devin du Village*.” He showed us a collection of several sorts of seeds which he had arranged in little boxes. I said to him, that I had never seen before so large a collection of seeds made by a person, who had so little land to sow them in. This remark made him laugh. When we took our leave, he conducted us to the head of the stairs.

‘Some days afterwards he came to return my visit. He was dressed in a complete suit of nankeen with a round wig curled and powdered, his hat under his arm, and a little cane in his hand. His appearance was plain but very neat, as that of Socrates is said to have been. I offered him a piece of marine cocoa with its fruit to increase his collection of seeds, and he accepted it. I shewed him a beautiful species of amaranth from the Cape, the flowers of which resemble strawberries and the leaves strips of gray cloth. He thought it very curious, but I could not offer it to him, as I had already presented it to another friend. As I accompanied him back across the Tuileries, we perceived a smell of coffee. “There,” said he, “is a perfume, of which I am very fond. When the other lodgers in the house where I live burn their coffee, my neighbours shut their doors to keep out the smell, but I open mine.” “Then you are fond of coffee,” said I. “Yes,” said he, “ices and coffee are almost the only luxuries for which I have a taste.” I had brought with me from the isle of Bourbon a bale of coffee, and had made up several parcels for presents to my friends. The

next day I sent him one of these with a billet, in which I said, that knowing his love for foreign seeds I requested his acceptance of these. He returned a very polite note, in which he thanked me for my attention. The day after I received another note, written in a different tone, of which the following is a copy.

"Sir, I had company with me yesterday and was unable to examine the parcel which you sent me. We are hardly acquainted yet, and you begin by making presents. Such proceedings place us on too unequal a footing, as my fortune does not allow me to make any in return. You will therefore take back your coffee, or we never meet again.

"Accept my very humble salutations

J. J. ROUSSEAU."

"I wrote him in answer, that as I had obtained the coffee in the country where it grew, the quantity and quality of it were of little importance to me, but that I would leave him to make his own choice in regard to the alternative proposed. The dispute was finally accommodated upon my consenting to accept from him a root of ginseng and a work on ichthyology, which had lately been sent to him from Montpellier, and he invited me to dine with him the next day. I accordingly went to his lodgings at eleven o'clock in the morning. We conversed till half past twelve, when his wife laid the cloth. He took a bottle of wine, and putting it upon the table, asked me whether it would be enough for us, and whether I loved to drink. How many are to dine? said I. "Three," said he, "you, my wife, and I." When I dine alone, I replied, I generally drink half a bottle of wine, and when I am with my friends, a little more. "In that case," said he, "there will not be enough, and I must go down to the cellar for another bottle." His wife served two dishes, one of pastry, and the other under a cover. "There," said he, pointing to the pastry, "is your dish, and here is mine." "I am not particularly fond of pastry," said I, "but I trust you will permit me to taste of your dish." "By all means," said he, "they are both in common; but few people are fond of this. It is a Swiss dish, composed of pork, mutton, chestnuts, and vegetables stewed together." It proved to be excellent. These two dishes were succeeded by slices of beef in salad, biscuits and cheese, and finally coffee. "I do not offer you cordials," said he, "because I have none. I am like the cordelier who preached against adultery; I would rather drink a bottle of wine than a glass of cordial."

‘During dinner we talked of the Indies and of the Greeks and Romans. Afterwards he shewed me several manuscripts, among which were a continuation of *Emile*, some letters on botany, a little poem in prose on a scripture subject, and some charming passages translated from Tasso. Do you intend to publish these works? “God forbid,” replied he, “I wrote them merely for my amusement and that of my wife.” “O yes!” said madame Rousseau, “they are very touching—poor Sophronia! I wept enough when my husband read that passage to me.” She told me at length that it was nine o’clock, and I took my leave. The ten hours in succession, which I had passed, seemed but an instant.’

After this account of the commencement of their acquaintance, St Pierre enters into a number of details respecting the preceding events in the history of Rousseau, which are now much more fully known from the Confessions. The following passage describes the manner in which he disposed of his time at this period of his life, and the state of his pecuniary affairs.

‘He rose in summer at five o’clock and copied music till half past seven, when he breakfasted. At breakfast he amused himself by arranging in papers the seeds, which he had collected in his walk the day before. After breakfast he copied music again till half past twelve, when he dined. At half past one he went out to a coffee house to take coffee, and we often met for this purpose at a house in the Elysian fields. In the afternoon he took his walk into the country to collect plants, always keeping his hat under his arm in the hottest weather, and in the sun. He thought that the action of the sun upon his head was beneficial. I sometimes represented to him that the covering of the head employed by different nations was uniformly thicker in proportion as their climate approached the equinoctial line, and mentioned in proof of this remark the turbans of the Turks and Persians, the high pointed hats of the Chinese and Siamese, and the mitres of the Arabians—all which nations endeavour to maintain a large volume of air between the surface of the head and the covering they wear upon it, with a view of moderating the action of the sun; while most of the northern nations wear a close cap. These remarks made no impression upon him, and he always replied by appealing to his own experience. I am inclined to think however that his subsequent illnesses were owing in part at least to this practice. He never went out when it rained. “I am just

the reverse," said he, "of the little figure in the Swiss barometer. When he comes in I go out, and when he goes out I come in." He returned from his walk a little before dark, supped and went to bed at half past nine.

"One morning I was at his house, when the servants of his customers came in the usual way to take the music he had copied or to bring him more. He received them uncovered and standing. To some he said, "the price is so much," and took their money; to others, "how soon must I return you this paper?"—to which the servants perhaps would answer, "my mistress wishes for it in a fortnight," and he would reply, "Oh that is impossible, I have a great deal of work, and cannot possibly do it in less than three weeks." Sometimes he accepted and sometimes refused the work that was proposed to him, and went through the whole business with perfect seriousness. When we were alone I could not help saying to him, "Why do not you turn your talents to some better account?" "Oh!" said he in answer, "there are two Rousseaus in the world—one rich, or capable of being so if he would, a singular, capricious, fantastic being—this is the public Rousseau. The other is obliged to work for his living, and that is the one before you." "But," said I, "why not choose some better employment than that of copying music?" "Every employment," said he, "has its inconveniences, and copying music is an occupation I am fond of. I do it for pleasure as well as for profit; and I should continue to do it, if I had a hundred thousand livres a year. Nor is it below the situation in which I am placed by fortune. I am the son of a workman and a workman myself. I do what I have done since I was fourteen years old." "But your works," said I, "ought to have put you at your ease: they have made the fortune of a great many booksellers." "Twenty thousand francs," said he, "is more than I have received from them. This however would have been a little fortune to me, if I had obtained it at once and invested it; but receiving it in small sums at different times, I spent it as it came. A Dutch bookseller has settled upon me out of gratitude, an annuity of six hundred francs, half of which is to be continued to my wife after my death. This is all my fortune. My little establishment costs me twenty-five hundred, and I am obliged to make up the difference by my labor." "But why," said I, "did you not sell your manuscripts dearer?" In answer to this he observed that he had obtained as much as he could for them,



and mentioned in particular their several prices, which I do not now remember. That of *Emile* was seven thousand francs. "But," said I, "you might now write more." "Would to God," said he, "that I had never written any thing. My books have been the cause of all my misfortunes, as Fontenelle predicted to me that they would be. When he read my first publications he said to me—'I see what your success will be, but remember what I now tell you. I have turned my literary talents to as good an account as most persons. They have procured me wealth, rank, and reputation, but with all this I have never received so much pleasure as pain from any one of my productions. When you take your pen in hand, you must bid farewell to repose and happiness.' And I find he was right. I was never quiet again till I laid it aside. It is now ten years since I have written any thing." Racine is reported to have said the same thing. Here then are three literary men of the highest reputation and all unhappy. The profession of authorship must be a very miserable one in France.'

The conviction here expressed by St Pierre of the wretchedness of the literary profession in France did not prevent him from devoting himself to it for the rest of his life, and from finding much more tranquillity and happiness in the pursuit, than he had derived from the more active enterprises of his earlier years. In reality the misery inflicted upon two or three distinguished authors, by their own morbid sensibility, is no argument against the profession of letters. This unfortunate disposition of mind is more the result of temperament than of particular intellectual qualities or professional pursuits. It may be observed in persons of every employment, and we are not inclined to think that the proportion of those who suffer from it is unusually great among literary men of eminence. If Pascal, Racine, and Rousseau in France—if Swift, Cowper, and Johnson in England were the victims of nervous disease, we may find among their contemporaries in both countries examples not less illustrious of an opposite kind. Fontenelle himself, one of the luckless wights mentioned by St Pierre, sustained the weight of its sorrows for a century, and was acknowledged to the last to be the gayest and most gallant man in Paris. In general it has been observed that men of letters are uncommonly vivacious—no bad proof that their condition is at least tolerable. Montesquieu says of himself, that every morning when he opened his eyes,

he enjoyed a secret satisfaction at beholding the light of another day; and that he had never in the course of his life felt a chagrin which was not removed by an hour or two of reading. The cheerfulness and gaiety of Voltaire are sufficiently known, and are the more remarkable as his health was generally bad. In England, if report say true, we need not go beyond the wits of the present age to find examples of the happiest and most amiable social qualities united with the highest poetical and literary talent: although it must be allowed on the other hand that the sentimental sorrows of lord Byron and the Lake poets are entitled to their full share of compassion. Dr Johnson was morose; but his great contemporaries, Burke, Hume, and Adam Smith, were uncommonly amiable; and our own Franklin, not inferior to any of them in genius, was still more remarkable for the cheerful sweetness of his temper. If Pope was occasionally splenetic, his disposition seems to have been radically good, and his life on the whole as happy a one as could well have been passed by a man of so many infirmities. He tells us himself that Rowe would laugh all day, and dwells with enthusiasm on the social qualities of Bolingbroke. Shakspeare and his contemporary poets we know were happy to a fault; and the wits of Charles will not be accused of having been uncommonly miserable. In short, we apprehend that a general survey of the private history of men of literary eminence would shew that instead of being as wretched as they are here and elsewhere represented, they enjoy life as much as any other class of persons.

For, to touch the matter a little more deeply and not to rest wholly in examples, it would be rather singular if the case were otherwise. If literary talent supposes an acuteness of sensibility which makes its possessor more vulnerable to the common accidents of life, it implies in like manner the 'divine philosophy,' which cures the wounds they inflict, and is itself, as the poet says, 'a perpetual feast of nectared sweets.' Success in letters, if not so intoxicating and brilliant at the moment as some others, is a pure and lasting source of enjoyment. It is true that like all other success it makes enemies; but their malicious attacks are only testimonials of merit in a particular form, and will be so considered by an author who makes a just estimate of his own worth. The radiant queen of the ball room regards the sneers and sidelong looks of rival belles as not less essential to her triumph, than the homage of the admiring beaux. The mistake seems to arise from confounding the

condition of the successful and unsuccessful candidates for literary distinction. The profession of letters is rather a dangerous one to embark in, at least as a means of support; because while the highest talents are requisite for success, mediocrity is less valued and worse paid than in most other pursuits. The unsuccessful candidates in this as in all other professions are necessarily dissatisfied and unhappy; nor is it unnatural that they should attribute their misfortunes to the injustice of the world, rather than their own defect of talent. These persons complain of course very loudly of slighted merit and public caprice. But to say that the few who have reached the envied heights of literary eminence, and are basking in the full sunshine of general favor, are also of necessity miserable, is, we apprehend, a rash and hazardous assertion, neither consistent with abstract probability, nor supported by actual experience. We might as well predicate unhappiness of a young beauty at the opening of her first winter in town—of a king on his coronation day—or of a pair of lovers at the close of a novel.

But however this may be in general, there have been doubtless individual cases, in which the highest and most extensive reputation has failed to secure the happiness of its possessor, and that of Rousseau was among the number. The nervous disease under which he labored embittered all his triumphs in the field of letters, rendered him through the whole of his life one of the most miserable of human beings, and quite deprived him at times of the use of his reason. His irritability displayed itself occasionally in forms bordering very nearly on the comic, as in the following instance related by St Pierre.

‘One day I was going to call upon Rousseau to return a botanical work which I had borrowed of him, and met his wife coming down the stair case of his lodgings. She gave me the key of his apartment, saying that her husband was at home, and I opened the door. He received me in perfect silence and with a severe and solemn air. I spoke to him, but he replied only in monosyllables, still copying his music, and often erasing and blotting what he had written. To relieve the embarrassment of the situation, I opened a book which was lying on the table. “The gentleman is fond of reading,” said he with a troubled voice. Upon this I rose to go, and he, rising at the same time, conducted me to the head of the stairs. I begged of him not to take this trouble, and he observed in answer, that this was the proper way to treat strangers. I made no reply.

but retired in great emotion, and with a settled determination never to visit him again.

‘I had not seen him for two months and a half, when we met one afternoon at the corner of a street. He came up to me and inquired why I had ceased to visit him. “You know the reason,” said I. “There are some days,” said he, “in which I wish to be alone. I return from my solitary walk so quiet and happy—I have there offended nobody—nobody has offended me. I should regret,” said he, with an air of tenderness, “to see you too often; but I should be still more grieved not to see you at all. I am afraid of intimate friendships, but nevertheless I have a project, when the proper time comes.”—“Why,” said I, “do you not hang out a signal at your window, when you wish to receive my visit? or if you choose to be alone, why not tell me so when I come?” “Do you not perceive,” said he, “that my ill humour gets the better of me? I struggle with it awhile, but it finally prevails, and breaks out in spite of me. I have my faults, but if we value a person’s friendship, we must take him as we find him.” He then invited me to dine with him, the next day.’

The following anecdotes, related by Corancez, indicate very clearly an occasional aberration of intellect.

‘I had perceived for some time, says this narrator, a striking change in the habits of Rousseau, and I often found him in a state of convulsion, which altered his physiognomy entirely, and gave it an expression really frightful. His looks were vacant and wild: he would turn half round on his seat, and passing his arm over the frame of his chair, move it rapidly, backward and forward, in the manner of a pendulum. Whenever at my entrance, I saw him take this posture, I expected the most extravagant conduct, and I was never deceived. On one of these distressing occasions he said to me, “do you know why I feel so remarkable a partiality for Tasso?” “No,” said I, “but I think I can guess. Tasso, united with the utmost richness of imagination, and the highest poetical talent, the advantage of being posterior to Virgil and Homer, and was able of course to profit by their beauties, and their faults.” “Yes,” said he, “there is something in that: but I value him because he predicted my misfortunes.” I made a motion, as if intending to speak, but he checked me. “I understand you,” said he, “you mean to say that Tasso lived a long time ago, and could have no knowledge of the events of my life. Of this I

know nothing, and perhaps he knew as little; the fact is, he predicted them. Observe that there is this remarkable property in the poem of Tasso, that if you take a single stanza from the work, a single verse from any one of the stanzas, or a single word from any one verse, the whole poem falls to pieces; so precise was he in his language, and so careful not to insert any thing superfluous. Now with the 77th stanza, of the 12th canto, to which I allude, the case is different. Take it away, and the poem remains as perfect as before. It has no connexion with any thing that precedes, or that follows; it is wholly superfluous. The probability is, that Tasso composed it involuntarily and without understanding it himself: but the application to me is clear enough." He then repeated this miraculous stanza, which is the following.

Vivrò fra i miei tormenti, e le mie cure,  
 Mie giuste furie, forsennato errante.  
 Paventerò l'ombra solinghe, e scure,  
 Che'l primo error mi recheranno innante:  
 E del sol, che scoprì le mie sventure,  
 A schivo, ed in orrore avrò il sembiante.  
 Temerò me medesimo; e da me stesso  
 Sempre fuggendo, avrò me sempre appresso.

Still, still 'tis mine with grief and shame to rove,  
 A dire example of disastrous love!  
 While keen remorse for ever breaks my rest,  
 And raging furies haunt my conscious breast,  
 The lonely shades with terror must I view,  
 The shades shall every dreadful thought renew:  
 The rising sun shall equal horrors yield,  
 The sun that first the dire event revealed!  
 Still must I view myself with hateful eye,  
 And seek, tho' vainly, from myself to fly!—

'I had presented to him the musician Gluck, after first obtaining his permission; and this distinguished artist, whose genius he valued and admired, was for some time received by him with great distinction. One day, however, without any previous misunderstanding, he said to Gluck, that he was sorry to give a gentleman of his age the trouble of going up three pair of stairs so often, and begged him in future to abstain from it. Poor Gluck was quite distressed about this for several days. As I had presented him to Rousseau, I thought

myself at liberty to inquire the reason why he had treated him so rudely. "Pray," said he, "do you think that Gluck, who has habitually composed music, for poems in the Italian language, so favorable for this purpose, now employs the French, although so very difficult, merely to shew his powers? Do you not perceive that it is because I have asserted that it was impossible to compose good music upon French poetry, and that he wishes to convict me of an error? This is the reason why I have broken with him."

'At another time, I called upon him, after assisting the evening before, at a representation of the *Devin du Village*, and thinking to flatter him, I gave him an account of the applause and enthusiasm, with which it had been received. I was surprised to see him redden with anger. "What," said he, "will they never be weary of persecuting me?" I was quite unable to understand how applause could be construed into persecution. "Oh yes," said he, "it is quite natural that you, with your simplicity, should consider applause as applause: you do not know the adroitness and malignity of my enemies. They first spoke ill of the piece; but finding that the public persisted in applauding it, they have changed their mode of attack, and now assert that I stole it: and to make the crime as great as possible, they are constantly exalting the value of the work."

He sometimes admitted himself that the occasional singularity of his conduct was the effect of madness.

'One day at table,' says the writer last quoted, whose narrative of his acquaintance with Rousseau is incorporated in the biography before us—"one day at table he described to us the precipitate manner of his return from England. He had taken it into his head that M. de Choiseul, then prime minister in France, was endeavoring to get possession of his person; and in order to make his escape, he quitted his residence at a moment's warning, without money, and leaving most of his effects behind him. At this time he burnt the manuscript of a new edition of *Emile*, which he afterwards regretted. He was obliged to pay his tavern bills, by breaking off pieces from the silver forks and spoons, which he had with him. He finally arrived at Dover. The wind was contrary, and this natural occurrence was immediately construed into a device of his enemies, to prevent his departure. Without knowing the language, he got upon an elevation, and harangued the people, who, of course, did not understand a word that he said. The wind

finally changed and permitted him to sail. These details were all given by himself, and he added, that he could not disguise from himself or us that he was laboring at the time under a temporary fit of insanity. "Such indeed was the severity of it," said he, "that I even suspected this excellent woman," pointing to his wife, "of being in league with my enemies."

The following passage is from the narrative of St Pierre.

'We met one morning at a coffee house in the Elysian fields, in the intention of walking together to Mount Valerian. Before setting out, we took chocolate together. It was a fine morning, the wind westerly, the air fresh, and the sky thinly fleeced with large white clouds, interspersed in fields of blue. We entered the *Bois de Boulogne* at 8 o'clock, and Jean Jacques began to botanize as we continued our walk. In a solitary part of the wood we saw two young girls, one of whom was dressing the hair of the other. This pastoral scene struck us both very agreeably. "My wife tells me," said Rousseau, "that in the province where she was born, the shepherdesses constantly assist each other in this way in dressing in the open field." We came to the river, and passed in the boat with a great number of persons who were going, from devotional motives, to Mount Valerian. We climbed a very steep ascent, and on reaching the top found ourselves hungry, and began to think of dinner. Rousseau conducted me to a hermitage, where he knew that we should be hospitably received. The monk who admitted us conducted us to the chapel, where they were chanting the litanies of Providence, which are very beautiful. We entered just at the moment when they were pronouncing these words,—*Providence that carest for empires ! Providence that carest for travellers !* These simple and affecting expressions filled us with emotion ; and when we had prayed, Rousseau said to me with much feeling, "I now experience the truth of the saying in scripture,—*Where two or three are met together in my name, I will be with you.* There is a sentiment of quiet and happiness here which goes to the heart." I said to him, "If Fenelon were living, you would become a catholic." "Oh," said he, in a transport of feeling, and with tears in his eyes, "if Fenelon were living, I would try to be his footman in the hope of becoming his valet de chambre." We were introduced to the refectory,

and sat down to hear the sermon, which Rousseau listened to very attentively. It turned upon the injustice of the complaints of man. God created us from nothing, and we have no claim whatever upon his justice. When the sermon was over, Rousseau said to me in a tone of the deepest emotion,—“Ah! what a happy thing it is to believe.” We returned by a very pleasant road, talking of Plutarch. Rousseau called him the great painter of misfortune: and quoted his account of the deaths of Agis, Antony, and Monimia, the wife of Mithridates, of the triumph of Paulus Emilius, and the sorrows of the sons of Perseus. “Tacitus,” he observed, “alienates our feelings from men, but Plutarch reconciles us to them.” We were walking at the time under some large chestnut trees in full bloom. Rousseau cut off one of the blossoms with his little botanical sickle, and shewed me the beauty of the flower. We then agreed to take a walk the next week to the hills of Sèvres. “There are fine fir trees there,” said he, “and heaths all covered with violets.” The mention of fir trees reminded me of the north of Europe, and I took this occasion to relate to him my adventures in Russia, and my unfortunate loves in Poland. They interested him very much, and at parting he pressed my hand, and expressed to me how much pleasure he had received from our excursion.’

Not long after the time to which this narrative relates, the health of Rousseau declined and he became incapable of the daily labor, to which he had so long resorted for subsistence. Various proposals of aid and comfort were made to him from different quarters, which his jealous and misanthropic temper led him to decline. He was induced at length to comply with the offer of Mr de Girardin and to take up his abode in an apartment at the castle of Ermenonville, where this nobleman resided. During the little time that he passed at this place, he gave lessons to the children of the proprietor: and one of them, who is now a member of the house of deputies, frequently takes occasion to felicitate himself in his speeches upon having been the pupil of Rousseau. It was hardly a week however after his removal to Ermenonville that he died very suddenly; and although this event happened within a few miles of Paris, and at a time when the reputation of Rousseau was at its height, it has always been and still is in a degree uncertain whether his death was natural or volun-



tary. The opinion of some of his most intelligent and warmest admirers both at the time and since was in favor of the latter supposition. Among this number was Mad. de Stael, who took the strongest interest in the subject, and expressed her opinion in her letters upon Rousseau published soon after his death. Corancez, who was intimately acquainted with him for several of the last years of his life and who made the most exact inquiry on the spot where his death happened and elsewhere, came to the same conclusion. On the other hand, his wife and the family of Mr de Girardin positively affirmed that he died of apoplexy, and the surgeons who examined the body in order to certify the manner of his death confirm this relation. The particular facts, as far as they are known, appear to be the following.

His wife relates in a letter which she wrote to Mr Corancez in the year 1798 in answer to one from him making inquiries upon the subject, that on the day of his death, which was the 3d of July 1778, her husband rose early as usual, but did not go out according to his common practice. He was that day to give the first lesson in music to Mademoiselle de Girardin. The family breakfasted, but he ate nothing, either from indisposition or some other cause. After breakfast his wife went out at his request upon some commission; and at her return about 10 o'clock she heard the cries of her husband as she ascended the stairs. Upon entering the room, she found him lying upon the floor. He was sensible, and requested her to open the window and then to place him upon the bed. Some remedies were administered, and after taking them he rose from the bed and sat up.—While sitting, he was struck with another fit of apoplexy and fell from his chair with such violence, that he gave himself a severe wound in the forehead, which bled profusely. He died without uttering another word. The certificate of the surgeons is dated the same day, and states, that after a full view of the body they both make report, that M. Rousseau came to his death by a serous apoplexy.

The accounts which attribute his death to suicide are two. The first is related by Madame de Stael, who gives as her authority a Genevan, whom she does not name, but who she says lived much with Rousseau at the close of his life, and had inquired with great exactness into the circumstances of his death. This account states, that on the day when he died,

he rose very early in good health, but affirmed that he should never see the sun again ; that he took some coffee, which he had prepared himself, and then walked out ; that not long after he returned and soon began to suffer great pain, but would allow no assistance to be called, and died in the course of the morning. Corancez heard the same account from his father in law, with the variation that Rousseau went out before taking his coffee and brought back some plants, which he infused into it. Supposing the truth of these details, it is to be presumed that he gave himself poison.

The other account is that of Corancez himself, who went out to Ermenonville to visit Rousseau the very day of his death. Upon arriving at the last post house on the way to this place, the post master informed him of the unfortunate event ; and expressed his surprise that a man, like Rousseau, should have committed suicide. Corancez inquired the manner, and was told that he had shot himself with a pistol. Upon his arrival he communicated this information to Mr de Girardin, who contradicted the statement with warmth, and proposed to Corancez to shew him the body, observing at the same time, that Rousseau had fallen from his seat and made a hole in his forehead. The offer of seeing the body was declined. The wound in the forehead, however inflicted, seems to have been deep, as Corancez was informed by the sculptor Houdon, who took a model of the face, that he found some difficulty in filling it up for this purpose. Corancez was told by Mad. Rousseau at this time, that her husband, just before his death, requested that the window might be opened, and looking out upon the landscape expressed the pleasure he felt at seeing once more before he died the face of nature, which had always been the object of his fond devotion. An engraved representation of this scene is frequently to be met with, having an inscription under it to the effect just mentioned. From all that he could learn by himself and others, Corancez drew the conclusion, that Rousseau had taken poison in his coffee, and finding his sufferings intense and long, had brought them to a close by a pistol.

This is all that is now, or probably ever will be known upon the subject. The direct evidence is strong in favor of the supposition of a natural death. The account of Madame Rousseau is sufficiently clear and probable. It is confirmed by Mr de Girardin, a person of the first respectability, who

had apparently no motive for deception, and who had every means of obtaining information, as well from Madame Rousseau as from the female servant who lived in their apartment, and probably witnessed the event. It is also confirmed by the certificate of the surgeons. These authorities seem to establish satisfactorily the truth of the statement. On the other hand, it may be observed, that there is a contradiction in some trifling particulars between the letter of Madame Rousseau, and what is known with certainty of the circumstances. She affirms positively, that Mr and not Madame de Girardin came into the apartment of Rousseau at the time of his illness; while Corancez was told by Madame de Girardin herself, that it was she who saw him. But as this fact, true or false, has no connexion with the principal event, there could be no motive for deception, and the anxiety of Madame Rousseau to make her account correct, even in unimportant particulars, rather argues in favor of her veracity. Supposing, however, the perfect accuracy of the narrative of Madame Rousseau to the extent of her knowledge, her husband might still have taken poison without her knowing it, since she states herself, that he ate nothing at the usual hour of breakfast, and immediately after requested her to go out on business. Her absence left him sufficient time to prepare and take his coffee. But this account, though it has come down in two or three different ways, and was evidently current at the time, cannot now be traced to any certain origin, which might serve to determine the degree of its authenticity. Contradicted as it is by so large a body of direct evidence, it throws but a slight shade of uncertainty upon the subject. The account of Corancez comes in a more authentic shape, but is also refuted more completely; because the fact related in it could not be true without having been known to Madame Rousseau, Mr de Girardin, and the surgeons. If we admit this account therefore, we are obliged to suppose, (as Corancez himself does,) a combination among these persons to conceal the real state of the case; and this is a very improbable thing, considering the respectability of some of them, and the slight inducement they could have for such a course of proceeding. There is, it is true, an appearance of deception in the story of a deep wound in the forehead occasioned by a fall from a seat: but it may be observed on the other hand, that had the wound been made by the dis-

charge of a pistol at so small a distance, it would be at least equally singular that it was not deeper and more considerable than it seems to have been. Few heads treated in this way would give much scope to the art of the sculptor. Taking together all the evidence we have upon the subject, we should therefore conclude without much hesitation, that the probability, at least, is in a favor of a natural death : and this we believe is the opinion now generally entertained, although the present biographer leans to the other.

It is rather remarkable, that the correctness of the account of Corancez should not have been put to the test of an examination of the remains of Rousseau. Ample opportunity has been given for this purpose by their repeated transfer from place to place since his death. Not long after this event, they were taken from Ermenonville at the request of the National Assembly, and deposited in the vault of the Pantheon, or Church of St Geneviève, where they remained undisturbed till within the last few months. Since the late change of ministry in France they have been removed, with those of Voltaire, from this place ; and we observe with pleasure by the newspapers, that Mr de Girardin, whom we have had occasion to mention already, as a pupil of Rousseau, and one of the house of deputies, has requested permission to restore them to the Isle of Poplars. The conduct of the generals of the allied army upon their entry into France, forms an agreeable contrast with this ferocious persecution of the illustrious dead. They extended to the memory of Rousseau the same respect, which Marlborough and Eugene exhibited a century before for the living virtues of Fenelon, and exempted the village of Ermenonville from military contribution. Whatever may be in future the resting place of Rousseau's mortal remains, he has secured for his name a monument, which the caprice of ministerial authority is equally incapable of giving and of taking away. *Ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ἐπιφανῶν πᾶσα γῆ τάφος :* 'The world itself,' says Thucydides, 'is the sepulchre of illustrious men.'

Of artificial monuments, the one erected to his memory, in conjunction with that of Fenelon by Bernardin de St Pierre, is perhaps as honorable as some others of a more imposing character. St Pierre himself gives the following account of it in a note at the close of the *Studies of Nature*.

‘I happened to meet some time ago with one of those little plaster urns, which the Italians sell in the street for three or four sous, and the idea occurred to me to place it in my hermitage, with a suitable inscription, as a monument to J. J. Rousseau and Fenelon, in the manner of those, which the Chinese erect in honor of Confucius. There were two small escutcheons upon the urn, on one of which I wrote ‘*J. J. Rousseau,*’ and upon the other ‘*F. Fenelon.*’ I then set it up at the height of six feet from the floor, in a corner of my study, with the following inscription,’

A la gloire durable et pure  
 De ceux, dont le genie éclaira les vertus,  
 Combattit à la fois l’erreur et les abus,  
 Et tenta d’amener leur siècle à la nature ;  
 Aux Jean Jacques Rousseaux aux François Fenelons  
 J’ai dédié ce monument d’argile,  
 Que j’ai consacré par leur noms,  
 Plus augustes que ceux de César et d’Achille.  
 Ils ne sont pas fameux par nos malheurs,  
 Ils n’ont point, pauvres laboureurs,  
 Ravis vos bœufs ni vos javelles ;  
 Bergères, vos amants ; nourissons vos mamelles ;  
 Rois, les états ou vous regnez ;  
 Mais vous les comblerez de gloire,  
 Si vous donnez à leur memoire  
 Les pleurs qu’ils vous ont épargnés,

To Fenelon and Rousseau I erect  
 This little monument of clay, and write  
 Upon its sides their honorable names,  
 More glorious far in my esteem, than those  
 Of Cæsar or Achilles : for with them  
 Superior genius was arrayed in all  
 The loveliness of virtue. Not upon  
 The base of human misery did they build  
 The temple of their greatness, but they waged  
 The better war of truth, essayed to stem  
 The tide of vice and error, and bring back  
 Corrupted mortals to the holy law  
 Of nature. They required, ye simple swains,  
 No contributions from your scanty store  
 Of flocks and herds ; ye mothers and ye maids,  
 No sons and lovers from your bleeding hearts  
 To die in distant battles ; never broke  
 The peace of neighbouring kingdoms, and they ask,  
 To grace their sepulchre, no other tears  
 But such as they have wiped from suffering eyes.

In another part of his works St Pierre has introduced the following epitaph, written by himself upon Rousseau.

‘He cultivated music, botany, and eloquence: he disdained fortune, and contended with hypocrites and tyrants. He improved the condition of infants, and increased the happiness of mothers; and he was persecuted. He lived and died in the hope, which is common to us all, of a better life.’

We have left ourselves no room for observations on the works of Rousseau; nor, after all that has been said upon the subject, would it be easy to offer any thing very new or interesting. His reputation, as a vigorous and elegant writer, remains undiminished; and is probably as well established as that of any author of modern times. His philosophical opinions are variously esteemed, according to the views and interests of those who judge them; but as they accord in substance with the liberal ideas, which are making such rapid progress in all parts of the world, they stand a good chance of gaining, rather than losing, hereafter in the public estimation. The spirit of his political writings is excellent; but their scientific value is not perhaps so great as it has sometimes been considered. The theory of a *Social Contract*, though somewhat plausible at first view, does not bear the test of accurate examination, and is rarely admitted at the present day by competent judges. But the examination of this subject would require of itself a long treatise; and it is much too important and extensive to be touched upon, even superficially, at the close of an article.

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ART. II.—*A Discourse delivered at Plymouth, December 22, 1820, in commemoration of the first settlement of New England. By Daniel Webster. Boston, 1821, 8vo.*

AMERICANS have been repeatedly charged by those foreign writers, who find it for their interest to hold up our national character to ridicule before the great republic of letters, with being deficient in that patriotic attachment to the land we spring from, in that filial and pious regard for the ashes of our forefathers, which the people of other countries feel proud to cherish. We are scornfully told of the shifting population of our villages, and reproached with a migratory, restless, and unstable disposition, and are pointed to the enterprising spirit